

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF REGULATION AND LICENSING
Scope Statement – Rules of the
Hearing and Speech Examining Board

July 2010

Subject: Providing temporary licenses to audiologists who meet certain requirements.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Sections 15.08 (5) (b), 227.11 (2), Stats., and s. 459.24 (6) (b) 2. and (c), Stats., as amended in 2009 Wisconsin Act 356.

Objective of the Rule.

To provide a framework for the issuance, termination and renewal of a temporary license to practice audiology for applicants who meet requirements for licensure, but have not completed the practical examination.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The passage of 2009 Wisconsin Act 356 authorized the board to grant a temporary license to an applicant to practice audiology if an applicant has satisfied all the requirements for licensure but has not yet successfully completed the practical examination. This will allow Au.D. degree audiologist to begin to provide services quickly without waiting for the next examination.

According to the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of Audiologists is expected to grow 25 percent from 2008 to 2018, much faster than average for all occupations. Hearing loss is strongly associated with aging, so increased growth in older population groups will cause the number of people with hearing and balance impairments to increase markedly. Wisconsin is no different. According to the Wisconsin Department of Administration's Updated Population Projections for Wisconsin Counties, between 2005 and 2035 the percentage of Wisconsinites 60 and older will grow from 17.4% to 27.5%. <http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/demographics/index.htm>

Medical advances also are improving the survival rate of premature infants and trauma victims, who then need assessment and sometimes treatment. Greater awareness of the importance of early identification and diagnosis of hearing disorders in infants also will increase employment. In addition to medical advances, technological advances in hearing aids may drive demand. Digital hearing aids have become smaller in size and also have quality improving technologies like reducing feedback. Demand may be spurred by those who switch from analog to digital hearing aids, as well as those who will desire new or first-time hearing aids because they are becoming less visible.

Another development that will make a greater need for audiologists is advancement in treatment methods for hearing impaired individuals, including implantable hearing aids and cochlear implants.

Employment for audiologists in educational services will increase commensurate to the growth in elementary and secondary school enrollments, including enrollment of special education students.

ENTITIES AFFECTED BY THE RULE

Applicants applying for licensure as an Audiologist, clients, employers and the Department of Regulation and Licensing.

SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY COMPARISON OF EXISTING FEDERAL REGULATION INTENDED TO ADDRESS THE ACTIVITIES TO BE REGULATED BY THE RULE

None.

STAFF TIME REQUIRED

It is estimated that 120 staff hours will be needed to promulgate the rule.